

Inquiry into the provision of primary, allied and private health care, aged care and NDIS care services and its impact on the Queensland public health system

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13 December 2021

Committee Secretary

Health and Environment Committee
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Health and Environment Committee Secretariat and Members,

RE: The provision of allied health and aged care services and impacts on hospitalisation.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our thoughts on this important inquiry.

BallyCara is a charitable organisation providing services throughout South-East Queensland with a passion and focus on inspiring an active, healthy and happy life across generations and communities. BallyCara provides wellness and home care services to enable people to live fulfilling lives and stay connected with their community as well as a range of accommodation services from retirement to varying levels of residential aged care.

For over 115 years the Hibernian Society has been committed to serving the community; in particular, disadvantaged people. In 1983 the Society commenced operations of Ballycara retirement Village and Aged care Complex at Scarborough and established its ministry of the care of aged people. The activities of the Society were based on the Christian values of faith, hope and love and in adherence with the organisation's Mission and Philosophy. The essence of these values and objects lives on through the expanded activities of BallyCara.

Position Statement

BallyCara provides age services that are driven by individual goals and wellness. We support the provision of age services that enable people to live healthy and happy lives. Key to this goal is the provision of services that empower individuals to maintain their independence, remain in their home for as long as possible, and avoid hospitalisation.

In this brief submission, BallyCara will outline how our current Short-Term Restorative Care Programme and allied health services are enabling people to live happy and healthy lives into older age. We also highlight the uncertainty of these programs' futures.

This statement was created with input from multiple members of the BallyCara community, including members of the executive team.

The statement is submitted with approval from BallyCara's Executive.



Short-Term Restorative Care Programme as Hospital Avoidance

BallyCara offers Short-Term Restorative Care (STRC) across Moreton Bay and Logan River Valley regions. The STRC Programme is focused on reablement and maintaining independence in their community for as long as possible.

The STRC Programme, delivered over an 8-week period, gives individual's the opportunity to improve their well-being, maintain independence, delay or avoid entering long-term care, and improve their ability to undertake everyday tasks. Importantly, unlike Transition Care which is provided through Queensland Health, the STRC Programme has a hospital avoidance focus with eligibility excluding people being discharged directly from hospital.

The Programme can be delivered in a client's home, in a facility, or a mix of these depending on individual circumstance. It provides a case managed and multi-disciplinary offering. Available support services include physiotherapy, exercise physiology, speech therapy, dietetics, social work and occupational therapy. Each service and decision is based on the client's goals, needs and preferences.

The Programme is delivered in-line with the Aged Care Quality Standards and is subsidised by the Commonwealth government. Individuals seeking to participate in the STRC Program require assessment by an Aged Care Assessment Team through My Aged Care.

The Commonwealth Government requires providers to report on the Modified Barthel Index score prior to commencement and at completion of the 8-week episode. After participating in the STRC Programme, individuals are routinely empowered to return their regular lives and are equipped with tools, skills and contacts that assist them to avoid further hospitalisation and delay health deterioration.

Services offered within the STRC Programme assist many individuals avoid contact with the hospital system and play a part in reducing the load of Queensland public health system. This could be through building physical ability assisted by physiotherapists and exercise physiologists, teaching new lifestyle skills and capabilities, or through in-home services that many individuals may otherwise seek through the public health system.

In summary, the Short-Term Restorative Care Programme provides older adults with services, support, and tools to assist them in improving their physical and mental wellbeing, maintaining their independence in their own home, and avoiding hospitalisation.

Provision of the Wellness Program Across Age Services

BallyCara's Wellness Program operates across Brisbane North, Gold Coast, Logan and Moreton Bay regions. Our highly experienced team of qualified health professionals offer a wide range of personalised activities designed to help adults over 60 live healthier, happier lives.

The Wellness Program offers specialised programs for people with a variety of chronic health conditions, including diabetes, osteoporosis, heart disease, arthritis, and asthma.



While Australian life expectancy and quality of life are amongst the world's highest, changes to lifestyle and diet, and increases to longevity, evidence themselves through increased incidences of lifestyle diseases such as diabetes, heart disease and forms of cancer. Without effective, proactive management, these conditions increase the rates and complexities of hospitalisation, and increase the load of the public health system.

Through engagement with targeted, personalised exercise programs, such as BallyCara's Wellness Program, older Queenslanders maintain their physical and mental wellbeing and are less likely to require acute healthcare.

The BallyCara Wellness Program allows individuals from across the spectrum of age services to engage with personalised, professional exercise services. Clients from retirement living, home care and residential aged care, as well as individuals that do not receive any age services, are able to exercise in an environment that promotes dignity and independence.

We have several centenarians that maintain regular engagement with the Wellness Program. These individuals live in their own homes and have remarkably high levels of physical ability.

BallyCara supports services that inspire healthy and happy living across generations and settings (including in the community and in residential aged care).

Uncertainty of Future Under Reforms

Bribie Island, access to allied health professionals is crucial in maintaining high quality of life and independence and reducing incidences of hospitalisation. We echo Mr Blayse's point that the ongoing feasibility of allied health in age services (both in residential aged care facilities and in-home) is in doubt under current funding reforms.

Currently the provision of allied health services to residents within residential aged care is limited to a few disciplines and for an inadequate range of services. For example, physiotherapy is only available for pain management and there is no funding available for exercise physiology. The new funding instrument for Residential Aged Care does not appear to adequately fund or recognise the inherent value of allied health service provision for residents.

The STRC Programme also has an uncertain future with its expected inclusion into the amalgamated 'Support at Home' single funding source. This new single payment home care program will commence in July 2023.

BallyCara believes for the Queensland Government should invest more of the health care budget in programs structured like the Short-Term Restorative Care Programme and delivered in a person's own home. We further recommend the consideration of programs contracted out by Queensland Health (Hospital & Health Services) rather than being delivered in institutionalised rehabilitation environments within, or connected to, Queensland Health hospitals. We also advocate for dedicated funding overseen by Health & Wellbeing Queensland for the provision of allied health services, health promotion and prevention with a focus on people 50 years and over to ensure wellbeing for all older Queenslanders.



For further clarification on any points in this submission, please contact [REDACTED].

Yours faithfully,

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